

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House  
other names/site number DHR Number 124-0042

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**2. Location**

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street & number 506 Westmoreland Avenue not for publication ☐  
city or town Portsmouth vicinity ☐  
state Virginia code VA county Portsmouth (independent city) code 740 zip code 23707

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally X statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. Classification

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**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** 0

**Name of related multiple property listing** (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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## 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub: <u>meeting hall</u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub: <u>meeting hall</u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>

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## 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>BRICK</u>
roof	<u>ASPHALT</u>
walls	<u>WOOD</u>
other	<u></u>

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Women's History  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** 1935

**Significant Dates** 1935

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.12 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 18 378370 4077013	2	3	4

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian  
organization  date 27 March 2007  
street & number P O Box 7638 telephone 757 / 623 . 3456  
city or town Norfolk state VA zip code 23509

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution c/o Barbara Senecal  
street & number 4241 Manchester Road telephone 757 / 484 . 6193 (Mary Westfall, current Regent)  
city or town Portsmouth state VA zip code 23703

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of  
the American Revolution Chapter  
House  
Portsmouth (independent city), Virginia**

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**7. Description**

Architectural Summary:

The Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House is an architect-designed one-and-one-half story building exhibiting characteristics of a Colonial Tidewater House. Constructed in 1935, the building features a symmetrical façade with a central entrance sheltered by a Classical overhang supported by scrolled brackets. The building is wood frame clad in weatherboard resting on a brick foundation. The roof is side-gable clad in composite shingles with symmetrically-placed gabled dormers situated on each pitch of the roof. An exterior brick chimney is located on the north elevation. The interior of the building yields a large meeting space occupying more than half of the building's main story at the north end. There is a fireplace on the north wall with a Classically-inspired mantel. At the south end of the interior there is a small kitchen, dining area, and a lavatory with sink and toilet. Access to the attic story is facilitated by a pull-down stair in the kitchen. The attic is unfinished. The Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House is nominated for its significance associated with Women's History (Criterion A: Other) during 1935.

Architectural Description:

The Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapter House is situated within the Westhaven neighborhood in the City of Portsmouth. The neighborhood has a grid plan of residential blocks oriented east-west and north-south. The neighborhood is characterized by early 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic buildings of the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles. The predominant domestic building form is the modest Colonial Revival Cape Cod and two-story central-passage Colonial Revival. Most of the dwellings have wood frame construction clad in wood, aluminum or vinyl siding.

The Chapter House is situated at 506 Westmoreland Avenue. The lot is 0.124 acres in size and is generally flat. It is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Westmoreland Avenue and King Street near the west boundary of the Westhaven neighborhood near the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River. The lot is sixty feet wide by ninety feet deep. The building is situated at the west end of the lot and faces east to Westmoreland Avenue. There is a brick walkway leading from Westmoreland Avenue toward the building. A flag stand is situated near the corner of the lot at Westmoreland Avenue and King Street intersection.

Constructed in 1935, the Fort Nelson Chapter DAR Chapter House building serves as a DAR meeting hall. The building appears much like a 20<sup>th</sup> century adaptation of a wood-frame Tidewater House. The building is architect designed, as noted by newspaper articles of the period and records of the Fort Nelson Chapter, though the architect is not named. The building's construction period was between September and December of 1935, with a formal dedication on December 3, 1935.

The building has a low brick foundation and wood frame structural system clad in weatherboard. This one-and-one-half-story building has a side-gable roof clad in composition shingles. There are two evenly-spaced gabled dormers on the east façade. There are also two evenly-spaced dormers on the west elevation. The façade comprises five bays with a central

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entrance comprised of a wood-paneled single-leaf door surmounted by a transom and flanked by windows. The windows on the building are 6/6 wood double-hung sash with plain wood surrounds. There are paneled wood shutters flanking the first story windows with a cedar tree cut-out on each shutter. The shutters are operable with original hardware. The entrance is accessed by a brick stoop with wrought-iron railing. The stoop is sheltered by a pedimented overhang supported by scrolled brackets. The building features a plain cornice with boxed eaves. A brick chimney is situated on the north elevation. The west elevation features two single-leaf entrances accessing the kitchen and meeting room. They are accessed by brick stoops with gabled overhangs supported by triangular brackets.

A plaque on the façade to the north of the main entrance reads;

THIS PLOT OF GROUND AND CHAPTER HOUSE WAS PRESENTED TO FORT NELSON CHAPTER DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION BY JEROME P. CARR IN HONOR OF HIS WIFE MARTHA WOMBLE CARR, REGENT AND AS A TOKEN OF DEVOTION AND GRATITUDE TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WHO, THROUGH THEIR COURAGE AND SACRIFICE, CREATED THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND ITS CONSTITUTION, WHICH GAVE TO POSTERITY THE GREATEST MEASURE OF LIBERTY, PEACE, OPPORTUNITY, PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS THE WORLD EVER KNEW.  
SEPTEMBER 3, 1935

The interior yields a large meeting room that occupies three-fifths of the interior space. The meeting room has entrance doors on the west and east walls at the south end. At the north end is a centrally-placed fireplace with a Colonial Revival wood surround and wood mantel. The fireplace opening has been bricked. Flanking the fireplace are windows. At the east end of the meeting room at the south corner is an opening to the dining area. Within the meeting room and dining area, the flooring is narrow pine and the walls and ceiling are wallboard. The baseboards and window and door surrounds are simplified with Colonial Revival characteristics. On the west wall of the dining area are door openings to the kitchen situated at the southwest corner of the building and lavatory situated between the kitchen and meeting room. The lavatory has its original toilet and the sink has been replaced dating to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within the lavatory, the wallboard has been coursed to appear as simulated brick or ceramic tile. There is a wood chair rail in the lavatory, dining area and meeting space. The flooring in the lavatory and kitchen is vinyl sheet. The kitchen has cabinetry and appliances dating to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The doors to the lavatory and kitchen are replacements, double-leaf, wood, and louvered.

The original attic access was situated within the lavatory, but was relocated in 2006 to the kitchen. There is a pull-down stair in the kitchen ceiling. The attic is unfinished and features double-hung sash windows without surrounds. An air-conditioning and heating unit was installed in 2006 in the attic with vents to each room on the first story.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

Historic Summary:

The Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House was constructed in 1935. The building has the characteristics of a typical Tidewater House, and exemplifies the Colonial Revival architectural trends of the 1930s for domestic architecture adapted for other functions. The Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was founded May 9, 1896 and was the tenth Virginia Chapter formed after the initial formation of the National Daughters of the American Revolution and the state organization, the Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution. The Daughters of the American Revolution is a women's institution focusing on historic, educational and patriotic objectives in American culture. The Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House is nominated for its significance associated with Women's History (Criterion A: Other). Its period of significance is 1935, the year in which the property was dedicated and the first purpose-built DAR Chapter House was constructed in Virginia.

Historic Statement:

*History of the Daughters of the American Revolution and Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution*

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) was founded on October 11, 1890 in response to the exclusion of women from membership in the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and in response to increased patriotism among women and their interest in expressing their patriotism.

The SAR was founded in 1889 and established its membership among prominent men of the New York region including John D. Rockefeller. The creation of the organization was also attractive to descendants of American Revolution patriots of more modest circumstances who applied in droves to be a part of what was felt to be an exclusive group of Americans. Membership was open to men and at its creation women believed that they would have auxiliaries similar to other fraternal and veterans' organizations. This hope was dashed when, at the SAR initial Congress held in April 1899, the incumbent President General defeated any resolutions suggesting women's inclusion in the organization.<sup>1</sup>

In response to the exclusion, a letter criticizing the Sons of the American Revolution appeared in the Washington Post written by Mrs. Mary Smith Lockwood. Mrs. Lockwood was known in circles as a feminist and operated a small hotel in Washington, DC. She had authored a number of magazine and newspaper articles, as well as books ranging in subjects from ceramics to houses of Washington, DC. Her letter to the Washington Post in response to the SAR recounted a story of the ancestor of the SAR founder, William McDowell, who rallied her husband and his compatriots of the American Revolution to press forward in fighting the British for American independence. McDowell had initially wanted inclusion of women in the SAR, but was unable to convince the membership at the April 1889 conference.<sup>2</sup>

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McDowell responded to Mrs. Lockwood in a letter and suggested the founding of the “Daughters of the American Revolution.” McDowell went further and sent a copy of the Mrs. Lockwood’s letter to the Philadelphia Ledger’s editor and to other influential women in hopes of prompting the creation of a women’s organization. Concurrently, a group of Washington, DC women assembled to discuss the creation of such an organization. These founding women were Mary Desha, Eugenia Washington, Mrs. Louise Walcott Knowlton-Brown, Mrs. Mary Morris Hallowell, and Mrs. Hannah McL. Wolff. Mrs. Mary Lockwood did not attend excusing herself after helping to organize the initial meeting. With McDowell’s encouragement, the women held a grand rally on October 11, 1890, the eve of Columbus Day, marking the celebration of the centennial of Washington’s presidency, to announce the formation of the DAR.<sup>3</sup>

The founding women set three main objectives that have remained in effect since the organization inception. The first is a “historical” objective, which is to perpetuate the memory of both men and women who participated in American independence. The second objective is “educational”, which is to follow the guidance of George Washington that he illuminated in his farewell address. The focus of the “educational” objects is outlined from the address in the section, “to promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge, thus developing an enlightened public opinion...” Finally, the “patriotic” objective directs it membership to foster patriotism to the United States of America and aid in securing liberty for all. In addition, each state should have a state organization and should encourage the creation of local chapters.<sup>4</sup>

In 1891, the National Society DAR appointed Mrs. William Wirt Henry of Richmond, Virginia as State Regent of Virginia DAR. She formed that state organization and corresponded with friends around the state to form Chapters of the DAR in their respective localities. The Virginia DAR grew steadily over the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1900, there were eleven Virginia Chapters. The addition of Chapters between 1891 and 1919 was relatively steady at approximately 10 per decade.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1920s, the women’s movement for equality had accomplished passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution. The effort of the movement in obtaining the right to vote was one of a number of changes in women’s history, encouraging other women’s groups to try and advance women’s rights. The decade of the 1920s also ushered in liberalism for women by the loosening of the moral standards. Women were permitted to wear shorter skirts, smoke and drink publicly, and had more jobs open to them than in previous decades. The efforts of national women’s groups, such as the National Women’s Suffrage Association and the American Women’s Suffrage Association, in enabling equal rights for women at the close of the more conservative Victorian era, may have prompted women in joining women’s groups on a local level. The 1920s saw a dramatic increase in the creation of Chapters in Virginia. Within the decade of the 1920s, 33 Chapters were created, the largest increase of any decade since the creation of the Virginia DAR. This increase in the number of Chapters virtually covered the entire state for this women’s organization.<sup>6</sup>

Another impact attributed to the increase in the creation of Chapters is directly related to the two World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the post-World War periods after victories in Europe and the East, a renewed sense of patriotism was evident and the need for recognition of those who participated during the conflicts. In the post World War I period, the women of the Virginia DAR were encouraged to support through the National DAR, the victims of World War I in Europe. At the



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1918 State Conference, the State Regent, Miss Alethea Serpell, shared with the attendant members that the National DAR had provided through contributions from all local and state Chapters \$20 million to help with the war recovery effort. The National DAR was restoring a French village, Tilloloy, and caring for two thousand orphans in France. She echoed the importance of women's roles in the post World War I period in her speech, "...it is the American woman's place to see that these children become worthy of the fathers who lost their lives in France and Flanders, and also in our own cantonments, who have given their all, that the world might be safe for democracy."<sup>7</sup>

The focus of the DAR was threefold, with their three main objectives. The Virginia DAR Chapters worked to meet the objectives in a number of ways. Some Chapters worked to preserve buildings that were of historic significance to the history of Virginia that existed during the Revolution. Other groups helped fund the restoration of County records. All groups supported the various war efforts and many marked important Revolutionary War conflict locations and provided memorials for the Revolutionary War dead. They also celebrated George Washington's birthday with local celebrations.

Buildings acquired or constructed by local Virginia Chapters include the Yorktown Customs House by the Compte de Grasse Chapter and Constantia House by the Constantia Chapter. The Yorktown Customs House is an example of a restoration project undertaken by a DAR Chapter. The building was acquired in 1924 and a restoration was underway from 1929 to 1930. This building was constructed in 1720 and was reputedly the oldest Customs House in the United States of America. The site of the Customs House was near the Yorktown Battlefield, which was the location of the surrender of British troops effectively ending the American Revolution.<sup>8</sup> The Constantia House is an example of a reconstruction of an earlier Tidewater House that dated to 1710. The house was modeled after John Constance's house on his plantation of Constantia, which was the first house in the City of Suffolk. The house has been removed from its original location and is no longer owned by the Constantia Chapter.<sup>9</sup> Other projects included the financial assistance of the Virginia DAR Chapters in restoring important Virginia sites and buildings, including Monticello.

*History of the Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution*

The Fort Nelson Chapter DAR was formed on May 9, 1896 at the house of Mrs. Charles R. Nash. The Charter members were Mrs. C. R. Nash, Mrs. James. Maupin, Mrs. J. F. Croker, Mrs. T. H. Wright, Mrs. J. C. Cresap, Mrs. Alex Butt, Mrs. C. W. Murdaugh, Jr., Mrs. John Lejeune, Mrs. Charles Parrish, Miss Tuna Marshall, Miss Annie Hume, and Miss Esther M. Wilson. They chose the name Fort Nelson for their DAR Chapter recognizing the American Revolutionary fort that was situated at the point on the Norfolk Naval Hospital in Norfolk County.<sup>10</sup>

Fort Nelson was erected by Virginia during the American Revolution on the south banks of the Elizabeth River just west of the City of Portsmouth in Norfolk County.<sup>11</sup> The site selected was opposite the City of Norfolk and the fort was constructed to protect the harbor between the two cities. The property was formerly known as Windmill Point or Mosquito Point and was property of Robert Tucker, Esquire of Norfolk. The property was sold to the United States government in 1799, though the fort had been erected during the Revolution. Fort Nelson was named in honor of Thomas Nelson, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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The Fort was erected in response to the bombardment of both Norfolk and Portsmouth by Lord Dunmore in the summer of 1776. The fort is described as being fourteen feet and high with a parapet fifteen feet thick. The fort was armed with a number of heavy canons and was large enough for large stores of food. In May 1779 the City of Portsmouth was ordered to evacuate after the British captured the fort and the city. The fort was destroyed during this seizure and was quickly rebuilt. In 1794, the United States Congress appropriated three thousand dollars to build Fort Nelson and Fort Norfolk. The fort is described in 1809 as having a star configuration and housed troops at least until 1811. At some point between 1811 and 1829, the fort fell in disrepair and is noted as being in ruinous condition. The remaining bricks from the fort were used in 1829 to rebuild the Trinity Church in Portsmouth at the intersection of High and Court Streets.<sup>12</sup>

The Fort Nelson Chapter was quite active from the outset. They raised funds for various patriotic events, including support for the Virginia House at the 1904 Exposition in St. Louis. In 1906 the Chapter erected memorial cannon at the site of Fort Nelson.<sup>13</sup> The group also assisted at the Virginia House at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition as house attendants. The Chapter donated a portrait of Chief Justice Marshall by Mrs. Jeffery Montague for the Virginia Room at Constitution Hall at the DAR in Washington, DC.<sup>14</sup> Other activities included soliciting members for the Red Cross during World War I. Along with other local Chapters, they were instrumental in having Highway 17 in Norfolk County George Washington Highway in 1912 through the Virginia State Senate and House of Delegates. In 1924, the Chapter had a pyramid dedicated to General Lafayette in the City of Portsmouth. Another memorial dedicated to Richard Dale was erected within a greenway in the City of Portsmouth. In addition to erecting monuments, the Chapter provided funding for the restoration of Norfolk County deed books and will books dating to the Colonial period to the period of the Revolutionary War.<sup>15</sup>

The announcement of the construction of the Chapter House and presentation of the deed to the trustees of the Fort Nelson Chapter of the DAR was made during the meeting at the home Mrs. Jerome P. Carr, Regent of the Chapter on September 3, 1935. The lot on which the building is situated was subdivided from a larger lot owned by the Carrs that they acquired in 1911. The Trustees were men who were husbands of the members of the Fort Nelson Chapter. The property was deeded pursuant to conditions established by the Carrs, which included no dancing. Also the property could not be used to secure any debt for the first twenty-five years of the Chapter's ownership of the property.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Jerome Carr, who was a member of the SAR, donated the house and lot in honor of his wife, and also donated some furnishings for the house.<sup>17</sup> At the October 1935 state board meeting of the DAR, the state historian announced that the Fort Nelson Chapter DAR had received a gift of a Chapter House. It was also noted at this meeting that it was the first in the state.<sup>18</sup>

Within Virginia, this building was the first purpose-built Chapter House for a Chapter of the DAR. The now defunct Golden Horse Shoe Chapter had acquired the Gordon Inn in Gordonsville, Orange County, Virginia through a donation just six months prior to the announcement by the Fort Nelson Chapter. The 1787 tavern and two acres of land surrounding it were purchased by the Chapter for \$12,000. Their intention was to rehabilitate the building for use as their Chapter House and additional meeting space for other organizations.<sup>19</sup> They were unable to maintain and retain ownership of the building and sold it in 1936.<sup>20</sup>

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*Architectural Sources of the Fort Nelson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House*

The one-and-one-half-story and two-room hall-and-parlor dwelling is a common building form found in the Tidewater region of Virginia from the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This building form was common in England from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was adapted in the Virginia region as a Tidewater House. The style was common among wealthy and modest planters and constructed of frame or brick and in some cases combinations of both. The house had modest dimensions not exceeding 20 feet deep by 40 feet wide with chimneys at each gable end. The asymmetrical plan comprised two rooms, which served as a hall, or main entry room and parlor, connected to the hall by a doorway. The hall served as a multiple purpose room for cooking and dining or as a workroom, while the parlor was smaller and served as a bedroom. The attic story was in some cases a single room accessed by a corner stair nestled in the corner adjacent to the hall fireplace. In other cases the attic was divided into two rooms with the same plan as the first story. The attic story was primarily used as storage or bedchambers. Interior finishes were simple and reflected the prosperity of the landowner. Ancillary buildings usually surrounded the dwelling and served as a separate kitchen, dairy, barn, servants' quarters, and other outbuildings.<sup>21</sup>

The building is an example of the resurgence and revised interpretation of the Colonial Revival style in architecture during the 1930s. The period of the 1910s to 1930s reflects a new interest in Colonial architecture from the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was mostly likely due to the documentation of historic architecture executed by the Works Progress Administration and by the reconstructions of early buildings at Williamsburg, Virginia and the construction of Colonial Parkway connecting Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg in Virginia.<sup>22</sup>

In 1942 the Works Progress Administration developed the American Guide series, which produced a guidebook of Colonial sites and buildings in the eastern states. The guides focused primarily on the 17<sup>th</sup> through early 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. In the mid to late 1930s the Works Progress Administration conducted a historical inventory of early buildings within each county of each state. They provided a standardized form for the survey and each building surveyed had a photograph taken to accompany the relatively copious description of the main building. The focuses of the surveys were cemeteries, houses, commercial buildings, government building, churches, and taverns. Most of the buildings surveyed were houses and reflect those that were constructed during the Colonial period.<sup>23</sup>

Journals of the period produced architectural plans, and provided drawings and photographs of American colonial architecture. This coupled with the interest in Colonial architectural styles and American heritage prompted a modern interpretation of the Colonial styles.

The exact source for the Fort Nelson Chapter of the DAR Chapter House is unknown. It is noted that Mr. Jerome Carr and Mrs. Carr traveled in Virginia to examine historic architecture of Virginia for a source for the building's design. Once they found an appropriate building, they engaged an architect who was directed to measure the house they intended to duplicate. The architect then designed the building based upon his documentation of the building the Carr's had deemed appropriate.<sup>24</sup>

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Prior to the construction of the Chapter House, a number of buildings had been acquired or constructed in Virginia by the National, Virginia and local Chapters of the DAR. The first such building was the Yeardley House situated in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Yeardley House was constructed by the National Society DAR in 1907 for the sesquicentennial of the settlement of Jamestown. The dwelling was a reproduction of Sir Walter Raleigh’s Cottage, Malvern Hill, Exeter, England. Upon its completion it was presented by the National Society DAR to the Association of the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.<sup>25</sup> The building form is similar to a common Tidewater cottage form based in English sources.

The influence of various sources most likely contributed to the architectural design of the building. In addition, the influence of the architectural character of the surrounding buildings within the neighborhood also influenced the design of the building. Though a modest interpretation of the Colonial Tidewater House design, most commonly used for domestic buildings, this Daughters of the American Revolution building functions as the meeting hall for the Fort Nelson Chapter in the City of Portsmouth.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House is situated at 506 Westmoreland Avenue, Portsmouth, Virginia. It is denoted within the City of Portsmouth Real Estate Assessor’s Office as Map and Parcel 03100470 and described as parts of lots 2, 4 and 6 of block 14 from Norfolk County Map Book 7, page 98, 99 and 100 of the Virginia Realty Company subdivision of June 5, 1907. The parcel is sixty feet wide by ninety feet deep and located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Westmoreland Avenue and King Street in the Westhaven neighborhood.

Boundary Justification

The parcel is historically associated with the property during the period of significance and reflects the original parcel deeded to the Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution in 1935.

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**Additional Documentation**

**Photograph List:**

All photographs were taken by Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian, on March 1, 2007.

1. Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House
  2. Portsmouth (independent city), Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian
  4. March 1, 2007
  5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia
  6. East façade (VA\_Portmsouth\_FortNelsonChapterDAR1.tif)
  7. Photograph Number 1
- 
1. Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House
  2. Portsmouth (independent city), Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian
  4. March 1, 2007
  5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia
  6. Southwest oblique (VA\_Portmsouth\_FortNelsonChapterDAR2.tif)
  7. Photograph Number 2
- 
1. Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House
  2. Portsmouth (independent city), Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian
  4. March 1, 2007
  5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia
  6. View northwest in meeting room (VA\_Portmsouth\_FortNelsonChapterDAR3.tif)
  7. Photograph Number 3
- 
1. Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter House
  2. Portsmouth (independent city), Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian
  4. March 1, 2007
  5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia
  6. View southwest in dining area (VA\_Portmsouth\_FortNelsonChapterDAR4.tif)
  7. Photograph Number 4

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Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Gibbs, Margaret, "The DAR," (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, Peggy, "The Daughters; an unconventional look at America's fan club—the DAR," (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution, "History of the Virginia State Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, N.S.D.A.R., with histories of the chapters from 1892-1928 inclusive," (Charlottesville, VA: The Michie Company, Printers, 1930), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>8</sup> Somerville, Mollie D., "Historic and memorial buildings of the Daughters of the American Revolution," (Washington, DC: National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1979), 170.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>10</sup> Norfolk Naval Hospital, now called Portsmouth Naval Medical Center, is currently situated in the City of Portsmouth. The area was formerly located in Norfolk County, which was annexed by the City of Portsmouth in 1894.

<sup>11</sup> The area where Fort Nelson is situated is currently within the boundaries of the City of Portsmouth. This area was annexed by the City of Portsmouth from Norfolk County in 1894.

<sup>12</sup> Holliday, Mildred, "History of Portsmouth," Portsmouth Star, 19 January 1936.

<sup>13</sup> Undated Newspaper Article on file at the Fort Nelson Chapter DAR.

<sup>14</sup> Undated Newspaper Article on file at the Fort Nelson Chapter DAR.

<sup>15</sup> Fort Nelson Chapter DAR, Meeting Minutes, Housed at the Fort Nelson Chapter DAR, 1896-1955.

<sup>16</sup> Norfolk County Deed Book 626, p. 44

<sup>17</sup> "Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of The American Revolution Will Have Chapter Here." Portsmouth Star (Wednesday, September 4, 1935).

<sup>18</sup> "Daughter of the American Revolution Hold Sate Board Meet in Richmond." Portsmouth Star October 31, 1935, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> "Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of The American Revolution Will Have Chapter Here." Portsmouth Star (Wednesday, September 4, 1935).

<sup>20</sup> Hendricks, John, "Gordon Inn," Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory, 4 February 1937.

<sup>21</sup> Foster, Gerald, "American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home," (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 106-108.

<sup>22</sup> Gebhard, David, "The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s," Winterthur Portfolio, Volume 22, No. 2/3 (Summer – Autumn, 1987), 117.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>24</sup> "Fort Nelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution Will Have Chapter Here."

<sup>25</sup> Barrington, Lewis, "Historic Restorations of the Daughters of the American Revolution," (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1941), 118.